Catharine Inc. 6
Babcock (J.) 1
K

ZOBEIDE.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL in COVENT-GARDEN.

———*deserta per ardua dulcis*
Raptat Amor. VIRG.

LONDON:
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MDCCLXXI.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY SCARSDALE.

MADAM,

I KNOW not whether mankind can be ſaid to have leſs Vanity—but of this I am certain, that they have infinitely more Delicacy—formerly, Dedicators met with few difficulties in addreſſing their Patrons——They made them every thing that was wiſe and good, and their Patrons, in return, (though they might not approve the production) yet gave their authors an entire credit for a clear inſight into human nature.

But

But contraband traffick brings many a good trade into diſrepute, and a fair dealer has now often only a limited opportunity of vending his juſt merchandiſe. How hard then is the condition of us modern Dedicators! To laviſh encomiums where they are not due, is not the Faſhion of the times; and now, (when the Subject demands, and there is the faireſt opportunity of expatiating on the moſt exemplary Character) I have your LADYSHIP's expreſs prohibition—But public diſorders frequently bring the ſeeds of remedy along with them—If I had ſpoken as I ought, it had been called an UNIVERSAL opinion, (and your LADYSHIP perceives, by this addreſs, that I affect ſingularity;) but ſhould I in the leaſt have failed, the world would have loudly exclaimed, that

I had ſaid TOO LITTLE, and your LADYSHIP ſtill more unjuſtly have cenſured me, for having ſaid TOO MUCH.

I have the honour to be, with the greateſt regard,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S

Sincere friend, and

Obliged ſervant,

J. CRADOCK.

PROLOGUE.

Written by Dr. GOLDSMITH.

Spoken by Mr. QUICK.

IN theſe bold times, when Learning's ſons explore
The diſtant climate and the ſavage ſhore;
When wiſe Aſtronomers *to* India *ſteer,*
And quit for Venus, *many a brighter here;*
While Botaniſts, *all cold to ſmiles and dimpling,*
Forſake the fair, and patiently—go ſimpling;
When every boſom ſwells with wond'rous ſcenes,
Prieſts, cannibals, and hoity-toity queens:
Our bard into the general ſpirit enters,
And fits his little frigate for adventures:
With Scythian ſtores, *and trinkets deeply laden,*
He this way ſteers his courſe, in hopes of trading—
Yet ere he lands he 'as ordered me before,
To make an obſervation on the ſhore.
Where are we driven? Our reck'ning ſure is loſt!
This ſeems a barren and a dangerous coaſt.
Lord what a ſultry climate am I under!
Yon ill-foreboding cloud ſeems big with thunder.

(Upper Gallery.)

Ther

PROLOGUE.

There Mangroves ſpread, and larger than I've ſeen 'em—— (Pit.)

Here trees of ſtately ſize—and turtles in 'em—— (Balconies.)

Here ill-condition'd oranges abound— (Stage.)

And apples (takes up one and taſtes it) bitter *apples ſtrew the ground.*

The place is uninhabited I fear;
I heard a hiſſing—there are ſerpents here!
O there the natives are—a dreadful race!
The men have tails, the women paint the face!
No doubt they're all barbarians—Yes, 'tis ſo,
I'll try to make palaver with them though; (making ſigns)
'Tis beſt however keeping at a diſtance.
Good Savages, our Captain craves aſſiſtance;
Our ſhip's well ſtor'd;—in yonder creek we've laid her,
His honour is no mercenary trader;
This is his firſt adventure, lend him aid,
Or you may chance to ſpoil a thriving trade.
His goods he hopes are prime, and brought from far,
Equally fit for gallantry and war.
What no reply to promiſes ſo ample?
I'd beſt ſtep back—and order up a ſample.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

HERMODON, Chief of a Canton in Scythia,	Mr. CLARKE.
INDATER, Son to Hermodon,	Mr. SAVIGNY.
ATHAMAND, Prince of Persia,	Mr. SMITH.
SEYFEL, an ancient general baniſhed from Perſia,	Mr. HULL.
HASAN, friend to Athamand,	Mr. OWENSON.

WOMEN.

ZOBEIDE,	Mrs. YATES,
SULMA,	Mrs. VINCENT.

SCYTHIANS, PERSIANS.

ZOBEIDE.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The SCENE represents rocks and trees, with a distant view of the river Oxus.

HERMODON, INDATER, Scythians.

HERMODON.

WHENCE this daring insult?
What strangers these, who, with intrusive march,
Have pass'd the summits of high Imaus' rocks?
Mean they to ravage on the banks of Oxus,
Or spoil the plains of innocence and peace?

INDATER.

Our troops, whoſe minds no dangers can appal,
Obſerving from afar ſome haſty ſteps,
Advance with eager ſpeed.—The Perſians meet us;
When ſtraight a martial youth, with haughty mien,
Demanded of us parley with our maſter.

HERMODON.

What maſter know we here, where all are free?
No kings, no ſubjects; but all friends and brothers.

INDATER.

He ſaid, that viſiting the Perſian frontier,
He wiſh'd to ſee a people far renown'd
For ancient manners and bleak liberty:
We offer them ſafe conduct and protection;
Whilſt they preſent to our aſtoniſh'd ſight
Rich trappings, blazing ſhields, gold, diamonds, pearls,
The guilty ſpoils of deſolating war:
But we reject theſe ſpecious toys of grandeur;
For poverty is chiefeſt grandeur here,
Not wealth, corrupter of ſimplicity.
In ſhort, we ſwear an amity ſincere,
And lo! they come to crown this proſp'rous day,
Which gives me happineſs and Zobeide.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

But Zobeide, thou know'ſt, whoſe blooming charms
Have won thy ſoul—was born among the Perſians!

INDATER.

The ſun, which riſes o'er yon eaſtern hill,
And which each morn we gratefully adore,
Shines not on us alone——It ſhines on Perſia:
Then may not Perſia boaſt its ray divine?

HERMODON.

Thou little know'ſt the ſecrets of my heart;
Since, after four long years in friendſhip paſt,
I ſtill am ſtranger to her father's ſtory——
What fate myſterious lur'd him to theſe climes;
Why perſecution ſtill attends his exile;
For, ever as I'd ſooth him into converſe,
He anſwers but with tributary tears.

INDATER.

To this fair country's maxims and her laws
He cheerfully ſubmits—and way-worn age
Can rarely change the bent of early nature.
But faireſt Zobeide—

HERMODON.

Is worthy of thee.
And yet I cannot gueſs the cauſe, her father

Bluſhes to ſpeak of whom he is deſcended;
His rank, his fortunes, and his fame unknown.

INDATER.

Whoe'er he be, I'm ſure he's juſt and valiant:
He loves me——He is father to my Zobeide.

HERMODON.

As no vile aims debaſe a Scythian's mind,
We will not meanly ſtoop to aſk a prize,
The brighteſt, faireſt prize, whilſt covert fears
Or foul diſtruſt ſit low'ring on our motives.
Seek him, my ſon—if no unworthy thoughts
Shall harbour in his breaſt—I will conſent.
But ſee he comes—

Enter SEYFEL.

INDATER.

O generous old man!
Thou dear companion of our happy ſhepherds!
This day ſome gallant youths will ſoon arrive,
And view with joy the feſtive rites that wait us;
I from thy hand this happy day receive
A gift more precious than the throne of Cyrus:
What age of ſervice can repay ſuch goodneſs!
I cannot ſpeak the feelings of my heart.

Witneſs

Witneſs, ye Gods!—not Hermodon more ſhares
My duty or my love:—Ah! whence thoſe tears?

SEYFEL.

They flow from tenderneſs and former cares:
If, amidſt all my griefs, this faithful union
Should heal ſome wound which rankles near my heart,
The ſcar would ſtill remain—For bleſſings oft
Recal to mind the evils we have ſuffer'd.

INDATER.

O! ſpeak the fatal ſource of each misfortune;
If not redreſs, we may at leaſt infuſe
The ſacred balm of ſympathizing pity.

HERMODON.

For all the friendſhip we have firmly ſworn,
Thou ow'ſt this tribute to us.

SEYFEL.

My gentle youth,
Zobeide, thou know'ſt, ſubmits her will to mine;
She is the only good the Gods have left me:
I wiſh this marriage—I'll adviſe, perſuade,
But cannot ſtrain the bond of rightful ſway,
The ſoft authority of friend and parent.

Go, thou dear hope of my declining age,
I would ſome private conf'rence here—Meanwhile,
Artleſs as native truth, ſtill urge thy ſuit,
Obtain her promiſe, and depend on mine.

[Exit Indater.

Ere I begin the ſtory of my life,
Let me gaze round with grateful rapture here:
Believe me, Hermodon—theſe rocks, theſe trees,
To me ſeem nobler than the Perſian court.

HERMODON.

Thou once waſt great?

SEYFEL.

I was.

HERMODON.

Too long, my friend,
Thy griefs pent up, have prey'd upon thy heart:
I do not hate the great—I love the Perſians;
Their laws and noble manners I admire;
Tho' all mankind at firſt were equal born,
I ſtrictly hold that ſubjects ſhould obey
Thoſe whom their Gods make delegates of pow'r:
Simplicity's ſoft charms, in this republic,
Are no fit leſſons for monarchic ſtates.

Could'ſt

Could'ſt thou ſuppoſe that I was leſs attach'd
Becauſe in Scythia—

SEYFEL.

If I have long conceal'd
The ſource of my misfortunes—pardon me,
Pardon a parent's doubts—I'd loſt my all:
My child here wander'd friendleſs—unprotected—
I fear'd the foul diſgraces of her father
Would fall on her, and ſtain her riſing glory.

HERMODON.

Forbear thy tears.

SEYFEL.

Know then, that under Cyrus
I carried terror to th' affrighted nations.
Hircania bow'd her neck unto my yoke,
Hircania free till then.

HERMODON.

Moſt harſh the chains
Which gall the ſtubborn neck of liberty!

SEYFEL.

Oppreſſion's arts, unworthy of the brave
To be the Prince's ſlave, t' enſlave his people,

To

To crouch, or cruelly exact obedience,
Dazzled a while—but now demand repentance.
The noble Cyrus, with a laviſh hand,
Would heap on me full meaſure of rewards;
I ever was the partner of his counſels—
But Cyrus died—and I was ſoon forgotten.
Cambyſes I abandon'd—impious man!
Unworthy ſucceſſor of ſuch a father!
Ecbatan, as yet the abode of Media's Prince,
At her new court conceal'd my hoary head,
Till Smerdis, governing the Median realm,
Smerdis, who ſought the ruin of the virtuous,
Gave a deciſive blow to all my hopes;
The unbridled Athamand, his ſiſter's ſon,
In firm alliance with a noble princeſs,
Whom Perſia's court had deſtin'd to his love,
(His tyrant paſſions brooking no controul,)
Demanded Zobeide as deſpotic maſter.

HERMODON.

And did his life repay the glaring outrage?

SEYFEL.

Thrice arm'd with innocence, th' undaunted fair
Compell'd our flight into this diſtant land;
By me alone ſhe was deliver'd from him;

The

The monſters, who ſurround the impious Smerdis,
More than their common arts employ'd againſt us;
With faireſt colours hid the worſt deſigns,
And couch'd the dagger, lab'ring to deſtroy us.
In Media it is treaſon, as at Babylon,
To brand the prince who next muſt fill the throne.

HERMODON.

O dire effects of hell born ſervitude!
Is then complaint a crime in Perſia's court?
Can you regret the loſs of baſeſt grandeur?

SEYFEL.

There you awake the thought which wrings my heart.
Smerdis proſcrib'd my life—they ſeiz'd—they ſhar'd
Employments—wealth—the price of all my ſervice.
My faithful child accompanied my flight;
With patient ſteps we labour'd up the ſteep
Of Taurus' craggy cliffs, whoſe o'erhung brow
Indignant frowns upon the boiſt'rous main.
Wearied by toils—thanks to the pitying Gods!
In theſe fair climes we found unhop'd-for peace:
Would I had here been born! All my regret
Is to have run a deſperate mad career
In courts and camps, attendant upon kings.

But I perceive my child ſhut up in deſarts,
Regrets the pleaſures of her former life;
And much I fear that reaſon, filial duty,
Combat too weakly each deluſive viſion:
Courts and their pomp will faſcinate our eyes
Ere bitter ills annoy the ſick'ning ſoul.

HERMODON.

What ills await you here? ah! what regret?
With us ſhe's free, applauded—honour'd—
No lurking dangers taint this hallow'd ſoil;
Here liberty has fixt her bleſt abode,
And looks with pity down upon the great.

SEYFEL.

Oh! I ſhould die content, if my dear child
Hated, like me, the perfidy of courts:
But let not my inquietudes repreſs
The dawning joys that beam upon thy ſon,
Conceal them from him.

Enter INDATER.

Zobeide is mine;
The blooming maid accepts my earneſt ſuit;
Let not my father or his generous friend
Frown on my fate, and I am bleſt indeed!

HERMODON.

Our wiſh, my ſon, is to behold thee happy.

SEYFEL.

Auſpicious hour! I feel my life renew;
A ſecond ſpring ſhoots through my aged veins,
And makes me hope return of better days.

Enter SCYTHIANS in haſte.

SCYTHIAN.

As late I watch'd my flocks on yonder hills,
A ſplendid troop paſs'd by—their chief, I find,
(Whoſe turban glitter'd on his cloudy brow)
Is bound to ſearch an aged warrior out,
Who formerly was known in Media's camps;
Demands of us the place where he's conceal'd—
Th' unfortunate old man he long has ſought for.

HERMODON.

O heav'ns! let him purſue him to theſe arms!

INDATER.

He there is ſhelter'd whilſt I live to guard him.

SCYTHIAN.

The gen'rous Perſian comes not to defy
A race of ſhepherds innocent as brave;

His breaſt ſeems lab'ring with ſome weighty grief;
Perhaps a baniſh'd man, ſome hardy warrior
Who flies a court unmindful of his ſervice:
Perhaps——

Second SCYTHIAN.

'Tis ſaid, that half worn out with cares,
He only ſeeks a ſafe retreat from danger;
Weeps the paſt horrors of malignant fate,
And grateful hails the dawn of riſing freedom.

HERMODON.

His tears are more ſuſpicious than his preſents.
Pardon my anxious doubts—I fear the Perſians;
Theſe brilliant ſlaves are willing to betray us.
Thee, my beſt friend, perhaps they ſeek for here:
Perhaps the tyrant at thy flight enrag'd,
Demands thy rated life——A ſpotleſs chief
Muſt ſometimes bleed to ſave the guilty prince.

SEYFEL.

Forgetting princes in theſe happier climes,
I am forgotten too—I fear them not.

INDATER.

We'll periſh all, ere this indignant ſtranger
Shall offer inſult to my more than father.

HERMO-

HERMODON.

Whoe'er he be, I ſhall not ſhun his walks:
If bold, chaſtiſe; if exil'd, we'll protect him.

INDATER.

Let him come on—he ſhall not cloud our joys;
A Scythian's heart is ſteel'd 'gainſt panic terrors.
Prepare the altar for th' approaching nuptials;
Place round it ev'ry gift of bounteous Nature,
And there preſent the hand that combats for thee;
[To Seyfel.
No cares intrude; and may the immortal Gods
Bending from high to hear our plighted vows,
Propitious ſmile on this important hour,
That gilds or darkens all my future days.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

ZOBEIDE, SULMA.

SULMA.

BUT what are your reſolves?

ZOBEIDE.

Here to remain,
And paſs my days in this wild ſavage deſart.
They ſhall not ſee me wearied with an effort
To wait the death of a determin'd father;
Not irritate a power which condemns him.
When to theſe climes our flight was firſt propos'd,
A thouſand horrid fears beſieg'd my fancy;
But time has reconcil'd theſe drear abodes:
'Tis no more Zobeide at a court ador'd,
No more the Perſians, jealous of my ſmiles,
Purſue the footſteps of declining beauty;
I've ſworn a total change of life and manners,
My only pride to emulate a father.

SULMA.

SULMA.

Your virtue far ſurpaſſes your misfortunes;
In your abaſement I behold your grandeur;
I muſt admire you all;—is your heart fixt
To ſhun the climes where nature gave you birth?
When dangers threaten, or when ills impend,
We ſhun the country which diſturbs our quiet;
But ſoon, the clouds diſpers'd, we feel regret,
We feel for pleaſures which we never knew,
And nature triumphs o'er our vanquiſh'd fears.

ZOBEIDE.

From the loud raging of a vengeful ſtorm
Heav'n grants this gloomy ſhelter—here, my friend,
Now all-reſign'd, awhile I will endure,
Nor ſhall you longer ſhare my adverſe fortunes:
Among thoſe friends, who have abandon'd me,
You'll find ſome mind compaſſionate enough
To recompenſe the gratitude I owe you.
Go, my dear Sulma, leave me to my fate—
Review proud Ecbatans' moſt happy people,
And in theſe deſarts leave your faithful Zobeide.

SULMA.

Rather let ſudden death purſue ſuch perfidy,
If ever I conceive the baſe deſign,

Remote

Remote from you to court ignoble grandeur!
I forfeit all for you:—your deſtiny,
E'en to the tomb, is cloſely link'd with mine:
But yet I own, with horror and ſurprize,
I ſee thoſe charms, which monarchs ſhould adore,
Ignobly laviſh'd on a Scythian peaſant.

ZOBEIDE.

When I reflect on the indignant outrage
Done to my youth, my family, and name,
A fatal offspring of th' immortal Cyrus;
Baniſh'd for ever from the Perſian court,
For ever bound to curſe the faithleſs Athamand;
When theſe fell woes are ſummon'd to my view,
All human things are equal to my eyes;
All are indifferent.

SULMA.

Uſeleſs conſtraint!
Do thoſe deep ſighs betray a tranquil mind?

ZOBEIDE.

Ceaſe to diſturb the vows I've ſworn to heav'n;
I never will review my native land;
If my frail heart would ſwerve from duty's path,
It muſt be bound in chains which can't be broken.

SULMA.

SULMA.

Th' unhappy father's voluntary victim,
With what reproaches can you load your mind?

ZOBEIDE.

With none.—Gods! I renew my vows—never—
Ye never ſhall behold the guilt of Zobeide.

SULMA.

Your choice is made then?

ZOBEIDE.

All is fixt.—My father
Prefers the ſon of his moſt faithful friend.

SULMA.

Can Zobeide?——

ZOBEIDE.

Behold the ſacred altar!

[The back ſcene opens and diſcloſes the altar.

My happier friends, without regret, prepare
Thoſe fatal chains, which bind theſe hands for ever.

Enter INDATER.

Where is the lovely bride?—the rites await—
Impatience chides the tardineſs of age,

Whoſe frozen foot imprints the rocky ſoil!
O let me hear thee ſpeak!—read in thoſe eyes
That I'm the happy object of thy choice!
Marriage with us is as a link of nature
Form'd between ſouls moſt liberal and pure:
A warlike youth entreats a warrior's daughter;
Will ſhe partake his travels and his fortunes,
Attend his combats, or avenge his death?
Shall Scythia rival Perſia in her pride,
And I receive the world's beſt gift in Zobeide?

ZOBEIDE.

I know thy virtues, and eſteem thy valour,
Thy open candour, and thy generous heart;
I promiſe thee, I've promis'd too my father—
His choice and mine are ſureties for the treaty.

SULMA.

You ſpeak a language foreign to my ſoul;
And whilſt you make me bleſt, deſtroy the bleſſing.
'Tis ſaid, within the walls of Ecbatan,
Thoſe eyes have ſpread a luſtre through the court;
But tell me, Zobeide—is it my misfortune,
Did heav'n ordain thee to adorn a throne?

ZOBEIDE.

It is not thy misfortune—it is mine—

My memory retraces not my glory—
I have forgotten all.

INDATER.

Still more ador'd,
Forget it if thou can'ſt—it lives with me:
Can'ſt thou, contented, view this ruſtic ſhrine,
The ſacred monument of ancient worſhip?
Here do our fathers pay their grateful off'rings,
Not ſuch as uſeleſs ſmoke in prouder climes,
But nature's gifts, fair emblems of their hearts.

ZOBEIDE.

That mind muſt ſurely err, whoſe narrow ſcope
Confines religion to a place or clime;
A Power unknown, that actuates the world,
Whoſe eye is juſt, whoſe ev'ry thought is wiſdom,
Regards alone the tribute of the heart:
Pride in his awful ſight ſhrinks back appall'd;
Humility is eldeſt born of virtue,
And claims her birth-right at the throne of heav'n.

INDATER.

Some Perſians newly landed on our ſhores
Wiſh to partake our ſports—They'll wond'ring view
A people all united but by virtue.

ZOBEIDE.

Perſians! What ſayſt thou? Perſians—

INDATER.

Thou trembleſt,
Can Zobeide fear to view a race of ſlaves?

ZOBEIDE.

Oh! my dear Sulma!

SULMA.

See your father comes—

INDATER.

Our parents, friends, thy faithful choice companions,
All come to conſecrate the ſolemn feaſt.

ZOBEIDE.

Away then; I obey. [To Sulma.

Enter SEYFEL, HERMODON, SCYTHIANS.

HERMODON.

Behold the Altar;
The ſacred flame of nature and of love,
Our ſolemn rites, as ſimple as ourſelves.

SEYFEL,

SEYFEL.

Thy father's hand prefers a noble youth;
Let truth and honour ratify the vow.

[Indater and Zobeide lay their hands upon the altar.

EPITHALAMIUM.

(The Muſic compoſed by Mr. FISHER.)

FROM Imaus' proud top, great Veſta, hear,
Propitious Goddeſs of the fruitful year.
For thee behold our pureſt victims bleed,
The ſpotleſs heifer and the milk-white ſteed.
Hear, Veſta, hear thy humble ſuppliant's pray'r,
And pour thy bleſſings on the plighted pair.

AIR.

Mr. REINHOLD.

Mild Goddeſs, hear their mutual vow,
And ſmile upon their nuptial hour;
Here all thy richeſt gifts beſtow,
And ſtrew their path with ev'ry flow'r.

CHORUS.

Hear, Veſta, hear thy humble ſuppliant's pray'r,
And pour thy bleſſings on the plighted pair.

AIR.

AIR.

Mrs. WOODMAN.

" May mutual truth, with pureſt light,
" Fair emblem of thy ſacred fire,
" Burn ever ſteady, ever bright,
" And but with life itſelf expire.

CHORUS.

" Hear, Veſta, hear thy humble ſuppliant's pray'r,
" And pour thy bleſſings on the plighted pair.

INDATER.

I ſwear to you, my country, and myſelf,
To th' eternal Gods—the object I adore,
To love ſtill more, e'en as encreaſing time
Shall onward lead us through life's chequer'd paths;
Ever more faithful—ever more ſincere,
To live, to combat, or to die, for her.

ZOBEIDE.

To your high laws, ye pow'rs, I here ſubmit—
I ſwear to be to him—Gods!—Who is't I ſee!

Enter

Enter ATHAMAND, HASAN, and PERSIANS.

INDATER.

What ſudden terror hath beſieg'd her ſoul?
My faireſt friends, O! haſten to her ſuccour.

[Ex. Zobeide, Indater, and Scythians.

ATHAMAND.

Stay, Scythians, ſtay, O! Seyfel, hear me ſpeak.

SEYFEL.

To what am I reſerv'd? accurſt misfortune!

ATHAMAND.

Know'ſt thou me not?

SEYFEL.

Too well—What mad perſuaſion
Conducts thy erring ſteps to theſe retreats?
Thy monarch ſet a price upon my head;
Would'ſt thou demand it?—Do,—miſguided man!
But tremble for thy own.—I ſtand amaz'd
To ſee thee brave a race that fear not kings.

ATHAMAND.

O! people, fam'd for juſtice, hear me ſpeak;
'Tis Cyrus' nephew makes you judge between us.

HERMODON.

Nephew to Cyrus! and among the Scythians!

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

Stern juſtice leads me on—In vain you threaten,
Unfortunate old man—In me behold
Thy future ſtay—the comfort of thy age.
'Tis true, a monarch robb'd thee of thy fame;
A ſentence moſt unjuſt prevail'd againſt thee.
Scythians, that monarch is no more—I flew
With wings of ſpeed to bring th' important news:
Thou ſhalt partake my treaſures and my pow'r.
What prince before did ever quit a throne,
To trace the footſteps of an injur'd friend?
Hear me then, Seyfel—hear thy country's voice;
Yield to a monarch's ſuit, a monarch's vows,
Yield to theſe tears, which ſpeak my deep remorſe.

SEYFEL.

Thou can'ſt not hence ſeduce me, *generous* Athamand;
If deep remorſe had ſtruck thy thorny breaſt,
Or meek repentance worn thy ſoul with care,
Spite of the ills I'd felt, I ought to pardon.
But O! I trace the ſource of this diſtraction;
It cannot be for me thoſe tears are ſhed:
Leave me then, Athamand—my doom is fixt:
Here will I languiſh out a weary life,

And die with holy freedom—Lead on, my friends—
The ties ſhall be redoubled that unite us.

[Ex. Hermodon, Seyſel, and Scythians.

ATHAMAND.

I ſtand immoveable—O heaven! O deſtiny!
O! fatal paſſion, bent on my deſtruction!
Gone! Is he fled?—would he not ſtay to hear?
The fierceſt Dæmon of infernal vengeance
Might glut his rage to ſee a monarch humbled.
But ſay, my Haſan, why yon altar burns?
Thoſe lights? thoſe garlands?—Why the nuptial torch?
A woman too was dragg'd in haſte away
At our approach—Ye pow'rs! What have I ſeen?
Remorſe will change to an avenging fury!
Gods, ſteel my injur'd heart!

HASAN.

Think where you are;
Your grandeur ſerves but to inflame their fierceneſs;
They know how to defend —— vengeance they adore——
They pardon not, if once they are offended.

ATHAMAND.

I ſcorn them all—I've ſeen them in our camps,
Their ſtouteſt warriors, and their ableſt men;
A lifeleſs race compar'd with Perſian troops.

HASAN.

But ſovereigns 'mong themſelves—

ATHAMAND.

Why wilt thou thwart
My ſtern reſolves,—the tranſports that inflame me!
My paſſions bear me on, and reaſon not——
Had I us'd reaſon I had ne'er been here!
Zobeide might drag me to earth's utmoſt verge;
Her loaded ſlave now brings again his chains,
To chain himſelf to fortune that purſues him,
To ſnatch her from a moſt indignant ſlav'ry,
Which this old man impoſes on her youth,
To die then at her feet with love or madneſs,
If this torn heart can never ſoften her's.

HASAN.

Hear but a moment—

ATHAMAND.

I will not hear.

HASAN.

HASAN.

Stay.

ATHAMAND.

Why ſtay?

This vile, this ignominious rival
Inſults my woes, and outrages my honour.
To make him maſter of all earthly bleſſings?
I cannot take alarm too ſoon, my friend;
A peaſant here is pois'd againſt a monarch;
Can any parent force a choice ſo vile?—
She is poſſeſs'd of nobleneſs of ſoul,
Nor can demean herſelf to wed a ſlave.

HASAN.

Pride is inconſtant—ſhe—

ATHAMAND.

Raiſe no foul doubts.
If pity cannot move her wretched father—
My tears deſpis'd, he trembles at my anger.
A prince is but a man, and man may err;
But when forgetting his ennobled rank,
He makes due reparation for his faults,
From heaven he pardon hopes, from man demands it.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

ATHAMAND, HASAN.

ATHAMAND.

I Knew it was—I could foreſee it all—
Gods! could it be Zobeide?

HASAN.

At your approach
Fear and amazement ſhook that beauteous form,
And life itſelf ſtood trembling on her cheek;
But in thoſe moments with a fault'ring voice,
She tenderly pronounc'd the name of Media.
A Scythian told me this—a hardy youth,
Who once beneath our honour'd banners fought.
The father and the huſband now are with her.

ATHAMAND.

The huſband! Who?

HASAN.

HASAN.

The valiant Indater,
The hope and glory of this fam'd republic,
To Zobeide here he ſwore eternal ardor,
Beneath the cypreſs ſhade—at this rude altar;
As you advanc'd ſhe ſunk o'erwhelm'd with terrors;
But then a fair attendant crowd preſs'd on,
And bore her weeping to yon ruſtic roofs.

ATHAMAND.

No more, my friend; I can endure no more—
My griefs pour in ſo faſt, I cannot pauſe
To ſeparate the tortures that ſurround me.
Why ſhould ſhe tremble when ſhe touch'd the altar?
Ah! why indeed!—She knew my glaring crimes,
She knew an altar could not yield protection,
She ſaw her father moſt unjuſtly baniſh'd,
Herſelf too driv'n to theſe inhuman deſarts,
The ſum of all her woes was preſent to her,
And I the fatal hated cauſe of all.

HASAN.

Her father—

ATHAMAND.

Had the proud exile read my heart,
He then muſt have appeas'd the woes I ſuffer'd,
He then had pardon'd, and thou might'ſt have
ſooth'd me.
But now I rave—O pity my diſtractions!
The fire-ey'd tranſports of tyrannic love!
Hell is in ev'ry thought.—But ſay, my Haſan,
Did ſhe not faintly name her native country?

HASAN.

No doubt ſhe ſtill muſt love—

ATHAMAND.

She loves it not.
She love her native land?—She weds a Scythian,
I ſee him in her arms—O hold my brain!
She twines him now with unrepining rapture.
Seize him this inſtant, Haſan;
Go, cloud the honours of the fell barbarian;
Tell him, his life ſhall dearly pay the price—
Crimes damn'd like theſe ſhall feel a monarch's
vengeance.

HASAN.

HASAN.

O think, my prince, you're not at Ecbatan;
Your voice decides not here—here may you periſh;
Are you not now within thoſe curſt domains,
Where many of your anceſtors have bled?

ATHAMAND.

Here too I'll bleed. [*Flouriſh.*] What martial ſounds are thoſe?
Whence are theſe ruſtic troops, who, high in air,
Brandiſh their threat'ning ſpears?

HASAN.

Such are their ſports;
'Tis thus they celebrate the feſtive day,
By nature fond of valorous exploit.
But O retire! at diſtance I deſcry
The ling'ring bride—as yet we're unobſerv'd;—
Let prudence guide you now—the time's at hand,
Remote from all, you may again behold her,
And ſpeak the troubles of your lab'ring breaſt.

[Exeunt.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

[Returning from the altar.]

Now the Rites are all complete,
All their Views, their Actions pure,
Honour, Truth, and Reaſon meet,
Love created to endure.

ZOBEIDE, SULMA.

Re-enter ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

My life, my love! O ſtay, my better angel!

ZOBEIDE.

What will my fate do with me? Ah! my Sulma,
This ſtorm will overwhelm me—'tis too much.
Ceaſe, thou falſe perſecuting prince;
What would'ſt thou add to all the woes I've
ſuffer'd?

ATHAMAND.

Hear but a moment—

ZOBEIDE.

ZOBEIDE.

Ought I, barbarous man!
Conſider where I am, and what would Athamand?

ATHAMAND.

By love conducted from the Perſian throne,
I come to caſt an empire at thy feet;
By Smerdis' death I'm lord of half the world;
I'm lord of all, if Zobeide ſmiles upon me.

ZOBEIDE.

What haſt thou ſaid? too cruel! Why from afar
Com'ſt thou to plant new troubles in my breaſt?
When firſt I liſten'd to the ſoothing tale,
No king, enforcing Hymen's awful rites,
Had doom'd thy hand to one more worthy of thee.
But now—
Without a crime thou canſt not ſhare my heart,
Without a crime I cannot liſten to thee:
Thoſe hallow'd rites have bound my humbler choice;
Take pity, and reſpect the gentle Indater—

ATHAMAND.

A Scythian!—ſo low—ſo vile—

ZOBEIDE.

Deſpiſe him not,
He far ſurpaſſes Athamand in virtue.

ATHAMAND.

Who could ſurpaſs me, had I power to charm thee?
Thy love alone would ſtamp immortal fame;
Thy love is fate to me—it caus'd my crimes,
And love muſt free me to a gazing world.

ZOBEIDE.

If thou hadſt ſooner felt this generous flame—
Now 'tis too late.

ATHAMAND.

This is the preſſing hour,
Fly hence, partake the glories of my reign,
O! fly with me, to dignify dominion.

ZOBEIDE.

May'ſt thou, remote, far, far from theſe ſad eyes,
Behold thy reign moſt favour'd by the Gods!

ATHAMAND.

I will not reign without thee—Robb'd of thee,
Empire itſelf's a curſe.

ZOBEIDE.

ZOBEIDE.

O think!—your glory—

ATHAMAND.

My glory 'tis to love you.

ZOBEIDE.

Ill-fated hour!
When firſt you ſwore fidelity and truth,

ATHAMAND.

In theſe vile haunts, can Zobeide waſte her days?

ZOBEIDE.

My days were all beſet with hideous terrors,
'Till Indater became my kind protector;
If then I live a prey to ſullen grief
Or wan deſpair—'twas Athamand's decree,
For he alone condemn'd me to the deſart.

ATHAMAND.

I ſue to ſnatch thee hence; thy hand as yet
Has not confirm'd this moſt diſhonour'd union.

ZOBEIDE.

I've made my vows to heav'n.

ATHAMAND.

Heav'n heard them not;
Kind heav'n was deaf in pity to my love.

ZOBEIDE.

Think on the ills your faithleſs love has caus'd;
Think I was driven from a parent ſoil,
Where ev'ry joy preſs'd onward to my wiſhes;
Think what I ſuffer'd, when o'er trackleſs waſtes
I wander'd all expos'd—When north-winds rag'd,
And hideous monſters howl'd their fell complainings:
Where can the wretched find a peaceful ſhelter?
Ah! where indeed? When he, her only hope,
Forſook, deſpis'd, abandon'd, and betray'd her,

ATHAMAND.

No more, my love, at this important hour,
But melt thy father's heart with ſoft perſuaſion—
Say to him———

ZOBEIDE.

Never, O! never—choice is made;
I and my friends are deſtin'd to misfortune;
Urg'd on by Fate, my honour ſhall not ſhrink—
Think'ſt

Think'ſt thou that Seyfel ever would conſent?
His long-try'd virtue ſhudders not at dangers.

ATHAMAND.

He is the fatal cauſe of all our woes.

ZOBEIDE.

Thou art alone to blame—again to ſee me,
Again to plead and drive me to diſtraction:
Leave me, my Prince—Be juſt to wretched Seyfel;
O! leave us here to linger out our days—
My father comes—Begone—this moment leave me.

ATHAMAND.

No, let us bend him from his ſtubborn purpoſe.

ZOBEIDE.

I' th' name of love, by all our paſt misfortunes,
By all that poiſons my remaining days,
Fly, nor afflict him with thy cruel preſence.

ATHAMAND.

Love plays the tyrant, and commands reſpect.
Gods! who behold the tortures I endure,
Second my love, or guide me to my vengeance.

[Exit.

Enter SEYFEL.

SEYFEL.

This hated foe again! to glut his rage
Muſt I reſign my life?

ZOBEIDE.

He ſeeks it not.
Dear father, he regards us both—But I,
Spite of his vows, would never ſee him more.

SEYFEL.

A worthy Scythian now is thine—thy choice
(For I controul'd thee not) receiv'd his homage.

ZOBEIDE.

I knew your will, and never would offend you:
The ſon of Hermodon was deareſt to you.

SEYFEL.

'Tis true he was—a gentle, noble youth,
Moſt generous and humane—And yet reflect,
There is a harſhneſs in the Scythian manners;
No faults, when known, eſcape their puniſhment.

ZOBEIDE.

Why ſhould you ſeek to terrify my mind?
If I have patient borne for four ſad years

A weight

A weight of woes, why am I now ſuſpected?
I've made a ſacrifice of love to duty;
If I in aught have fail'd, I will atone;
But will not fear a father or a huſband.

SEYFEL.

Think not thy father labour'd to reproach thee—
Thy huſband was thy choice—he ſure is dear:
O may thy peace be henceforth undiſturb'd!
Give up this day to merriment and joy!
Forget thy ills—I haſten to the feſtival.

[Exit Seyfel.

SULMA.

Ah! cruel feſtival!—You then reſolve
To ſuffer joyleſs life in theſe abodes!

ZOBEIDE.

Gods! Gods!

SULMA.

Your native country, friends, the Perſian court,
A gen'rous prince——who has charm'd perhaps your heart—
All you abandon without fear or pity!

ZOBEIDE.

I give up all; my deſtiny demands it.

SULMA.

Can you for ever hate your court and country?

ZOBEIDE.

Unfortunate! they never were ſo dear.

SULMA.

If I deſerve it, open all your heart.

ZOBEIDE.

All there is anarchy and dread confuſion,
Thy heart would bleed to know how mine's afflicted;
There are all ſtor'd the chequer'd ills of fortune,
And greater far thoſe ills ourſelves create;
But when with exile, ſhame, diſgrace, they gather
And crowd ſo faſt—after the happieſt days—
When all theſe fierce aſſaults at once unite,
A heart—a feeble heart can not ſupport them.

SULMA.

Ecbatan—a great prince—

ZOBEIDE.

Ah! fatal Athamand!
What dæmon led thee here? why to diſcover
This dagger long conceal'd, which muſt deſtroy me?
Ah! why renewing my diſgrace—thy injuries—
Muſt all my former wounds now bleed afreſh?

SULMA.

No longer yield to thoſe inhuman laws,
By which a cruel parent would enſlave you;
If you're his comfort, ought he to oppreſs you?
Protect his age, but never be his victim;
The braveſt troops which Perſia's pride can boaſt,
Ev'n to theſe foreſts have purſu'd your ſteps,
Led on by warlike Athamand—Athamand
Above all—Is he not your maſter?

ZOBEIDE.

No.

SULMA.

In his fair climes high heaven gave you birth;
Hath he not pow'r to break this fatal chain,
This foul reproach to you, your prince, and Perſia?

What think you? O return with Athamand!
If you have long accompanied the flight
Of an old parent—lead him back to glory!
Let him renounce his hatred to a court;
Let not his ſtern deſtructive rage prevail,
To draw down vengeance on a guiltleſs head!

ZOBEIDE.

I ſcorn thy erring counſel.—Such reſolves
Would cauſe much blood-ſhed—plunge us all in ruin;
My father would expire with grief or rage:
In ſhort, my fate is fixt—I'm doom'd to ſlav'ry—
Time may alleviate many weighty ills,
Or cuſtom fortify the mind to bear them.

SULMA.

Meanwhile you weep—with horror you review
Theſe barb'rous wilds, where from the pomp of courts
I ſee you ſhrink a prey to want and mis'ry;
Repentance then may come too late to aid you;
What will remain, alas! to you?

ZOBEIDE.

Deſpair.

SULMA.

SULMA.

Weigh'd down with cares, what can you do?

ZOBEIDE.

My duty.
The honour to fulfil it—that evidence
Which conſcience ever gives to virtuous claims,
That ſhall ſuſtain me to my lateſt moments,
And crown theſe conflicts with immortal glory.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

ATHAMAND, HASAN.

ATHAMAND.

TALK not of dangers to a frantic mind—

HASAN.

You riſque too much—

ATHAMAND.

What can I riſque? my life!
What's life, alas! depriv'd of her I love?
My friends!—all men of fortitude and honour—
They'll inſtant ruſh on theſe *intrepid* warriors,
Give to the ſword—

HASAN.

They'll periſh at your will.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

Oh! no; they'll conquer for me.—Who comes here?

HASAN.

'Tis he—I know him well—the ſavage Scythian.

ATHAMAND.

Remote from me let all my guards retire,
Let none approach without expreſs command,
But keep them ready to engage—Begone, I ſay.

[Exit Haſan.

Enter INDATER.

ATHAMAND.

Know'ſt thou in whoſe preſence thou appeareſt?

INDATER.

'Tis ſaid, a city owns in thee its maſter,
Which they call Ecbatan; from Taurus' mount
We view its haughty ramparts, rais'd by Cyrus:
'Tis ſaid (but there I think report's too big)
That thou can'ſt raiſe as many ſplendid troops
As we can boaſt of peaceful citizens.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

'Tis true, I have beneath me troops invincible;
The meaneſt Perſian in our awful ranks
Is richer, greater, more reſpectable,
Than any whom thou'ſt ſeen in theſe domains,
Where heaven levels all by indigence.

INDATER.

We envy none the glitt'ring toys of greatneſs;
Nature here laviſhes her richeſt ſtores;
Earth grants us food; we drink th' unſullied ſpring;
Our caves yield ſhelter, and our rocks protection.
Daughter of heav'n, thou truly-rich Content!
Still ſhow'r thy bleſſings, who poſſeſſeſt all;
No pow'r on earth can taſte of bliſs without thee.

ATHAMAND.

Thy heart then owns no intereſted views?
But glory ſure—

INDATER.

My life to attain it!

ATHAMAND.

Be greatly daring then—Led on by us,
Glory ſhall ſpread her flatt'ring pinions round thee,
And fan the gales of godlike emulation.

INDATER.

INDATER.

Can I deſcend to own thee for a maſter?

ATHAMAND.

'Tis glory ſure to own a generous maſter,
Who ſets the nobleſt price on nobleſt actions:
Beneath our arms, what might not be atchiev'd?
I've 'mong my warriors Scythians like to thee.

INDATER.

Thou haſt none.—Know, that th' unworthy Scythians,
Who border on thy climes, are not like us;
Avarice has canker'd their impriſon'd minds,
And luſt of gold has blinded them to juſtice.

ATHAMAND.

Seek to advance thy countrymen to glory!
To ſhelter only ſuits the languid ſoul;
Here honour withers—juſtice ye have none—
Come on, with me learn juſtice, for thou need'ſt it.

INDATER.

Learn juſtice?

ATHAMAND.

Ay, juſtice, impious traitor!

Render to me the treaſure thou haſt ſtol'n;
Render an honour'd ſubject to her monarch;
A good no mortal ſhall deprive me of,
And which, with juſtice, cannot be withheld.
Give up, this inſtant, Zobeide.

INDATER.

Hah! to thee!
To that high menace, and that haughty air!
She is thy ſubject!—dar'ſt thou then pretend,
That the unhappy race in Media born
Have not the common rights of human kind?
That man may be a ſlave in Media's realms
I well conſent—in Scythia he is free.
From that bleſt moment Zobeide ſought for ſhelter
On the bleak margin of theſe drear domains,
Liberty and peace, their ſure aſſociates,
Happy equality, all life's golden bleſſings,
Bleſſings, which Perſia raviſh'd from mankind,
Bleſſings, by others loſt, by us redeem'd,
Were nature's claims, th' inheritance of Zobeide.

ATHAMAND.

The treaſure I contend for is ſo great,
I would diſpute my title with the world;
None but a king can hold the leaſt pretence.

INDATER.

INDATER.

Shall kings controul th' eternal rights of nature?
The free-born mind is royal of itſelf,
Nor aſks vain gloſſes from exterior grandeur.

ATHAMAND.

Thou canſt but have a feeble low idea
Of all the fury that inflames my ſoul;
I would forego a nempire to obtain her:
And canſt thou think to treaſure ſuch a bleſſing?
The treaſure's mine—renounce her, fell barbarian!

INDATER.

Imprudent ſtranger!—the fury of thy words
Excites my pity, more than my reſentment;
Rude and untutor'd, new from nature's hand,
I ſimply ſpoke my love, and Zobeide choſe me:
Fly from theſe bleſt abodes, thou feeble man!
Thy rank, thy fortunes, give thee no protection;
Offend not mortals ev'ry way thy equals;
Thou art no monarch here.

ATHAMAND.

That ſacred character
Accompanies me throughout the univerſe;
If I but give the word, a warlike troop,

Ardent on duty, drags thee to my feet:
But I deſcend to thee—caſt off my dignity—
Enough, I am a man—this ſword ſufficeth
To bring again the wealth thou'ſt raviſh'd from me.

INDATER.

Hah! have we not in peace receiv'd thee here?
Giv'n thee protection—our ſimplicity
Strictly obſerv'd the rites of hoſpitality;
And wouldſt thou force me, on this ſacred day,
To break down all, and ſtain me with thy blood?

ATHAMAND.

Seek not to juſtify a coward's fears,
Cowards are always talkative of reaſon;
Draw—or yield the bright reward—that honour
A monarch deigns to give thee.

INDATER.

'Tis too much:
Man cannot brook ſuch wrongs.

ATHAMAND.

Retire this inſtant then—no more delay—
They may prevent us here.—Now, to decide:
Not Perſia's fair dominion fires my ſoul,
I fight for more—much more—

INDATER.

For Zobeide.

And, as my cauſe is juſt, avenge, ye Pow'rs!

[Exeunt.

Enter HERMODON, SEYFEL, SCYTHIANS.

HERMODON.

My ſon, my ſon—let my paternal care
Lead back thy wand'ring ſteps—all now expect thee;
The gentle Zobeide blames thy cold delay,
And chills the feaſt with tears—Ha!—is he fled?
Unlike himſelf he look'd—terror, methought,
Or rage ſat trembling on his troubled brow.

SEYFEL.

I may conceive imaginary fears;
But, if my eyes by grief are not impair'd,
I ſaw the haughty Perſian prince precede him.

HERMODON.

The Perſian prince?——
Imagination teems with weightieſt terrors;

My ſon is gentle—yet unfledg'd in arms—
But Athamand——

SEYFEL.

Is daring e'en to madneſs.

HERMODON.

Let's follow cloſe—ah! feebleneſs invades
My frozen ſoul—my ſenſes, all diſmay'd,
Betray my courage—I faint, my friend—I fall—
My ſon returns not yet—oh heavens! they fight—
Now, now he bleeds, perhaps——leave me this inſtant——
Aſſemble all our warriors to protect him!

SCYTHIAN.

Droop not, my friend--our troops ſtand all prepar'd.
I haſte to lead them on—ſummon thy courage!
[Exit.

SEYFEL.

O call up awful virtue to thy ſuccour!

HERMODON.

Yes, I'll ſupport me, Seyſel; I revive,
I feel returning ſtrength.

Enter

Enter ATHAMAND (with a ſword drawn) HASAN, and PERSIANS.

ATHAMAND.

To arms, to arms!
My gen'rous friends——the times now call for valour——
But where to find her? follow me—come on—

HERMODON.

Barbarian!—monſter!

ATHAMAND.

Stop not, but obey me;
Run, I ſay, fly, and my intrepid guards,
If any Scythians dare but to oppoſe,
Ruſh like a tempeſt through the ſavage throng,
Hew out a way, and ſnatch my fair from fate!

HERMODON.

Go, raviſher!—my ſon ſhall be reveng'd
On theſe foul inſults thou haſt dar'd to offer.

ATHAMAND.

Thy ſon? what, Indater? He dearly pays
For all th' afflictions he has brought on me;
Thy ſon hath merited to feel our vengeance:
Make cloſe the paſſage there——

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

Finiſh thy terrors—
Finiſh—is my ſon dead? ah! tell me not!
I know he is—I read it in thy looks.
Foul murderer! Ruffian! O my child, my child!

ATHAMAND.

In pity to his age, I'd ſpare his eyes
The mournful ſight of his expiring ſon:
For thee, proud Seyfel, author of theſe ills!
Whoſe rigid purpoſe forc'd me to the combat,
For Zobeide's ſake, I wiſh to ſpare thy life;
But ſtay no longer, bring her to my arms—
A king demands, a kingdom to requite thee.
[Exit Athamand.

SEYFEL.

Inhuman tyrant! Oh, day of grief and ſorrows!
All my misfortunes now are fall'n on thee,
And cruſh thee to the grave—Look up, my friend,
Haſte from this fatal place--ſpeed thee to vengeance.

HERMODON.

O lead me, Seyfel, to my dying ſon,
That I may cloſe his eyes, and reſt beſide him;
Then in one ſepulchre encloſe us both.

SEYFEL.

SEYFEL.

I will not tamely fall—to guard my child
I'll let out all my blood—take courage—hark!
I hear ſome martial ſounds—they'll nobly fight.—

HERMODON.

Our Scythians then are up—ye pitying pow'rs!
Avenge the ſuff'rings of an injur'd parent.

Enter ZOBEIDE in haſte.

ZOBEIDE.

Ah! whither would you fly unarm'd?—The foes
Bear no reſpect to tears, to ſex, or age;
Full ſtreams of blood on all ſides are diſpers'd—
From the dread tumult of this murd'rous ſcene
I come t' augment the horrors—thy Son expires!
Here at your feet I fall—I am the cauſe,
The fatal cauſe of theſe unheard-of mis'ries;
O let your Scythians glut their rage on me;
I bleed a willing victim to your woes.

SEYFEL.

I ſacrifice my age t' appeaſe their vengeance,
And die, my child, to ſave thee.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

Why do we pauſe?
I will forget my years, my exhauſted ſtrength,
And die with glory as I've liv'd with honour.

SEYFEL.

More fatal news!

Enter SCYTHIAN.

SCYTHIAN.

The conquering monarch—
I ſcarce have breath to ſpeak—precedes a troop,
A choſen band—
To bear off Zobeide to the Perſian court—
He threatens vengeance on the wretched Seyfel.

SEYFEL.

And wilt thou go?

ZOBEIDE.

Think not ſo meanly of me;
Think not ſo lightly of your daughter's virtue;
Though Athamand has lov'd me e'en to madneſs,
I'll ne'er conſent.—
No crown ſhall glitter to my dazzled ſight,

No

No pow'r ſhall drag me to my native land,
To wed the guilty prince who ſlew my huſband.

Enter HASAN with Perſians.

HASAN.

Perſians, bind Seyfel inſtantly in chains;
We come to guard fair Zobeide to her throne.

ZOBEIDE.

Here will I rather die, than yield me up.

SEYFEL.

Tell your proud prince, the father and the child
Are both reſolv'd—He cannot ſhake their virtue.

HASAN.

The fair one muſt be borne this inſtant hence,
The prince brooks no delay—if Hermodon
Too raſhly daring to oppoſe his will——

HERMODON.

What would your prince? I've no more ſons to loſe——
I fear him not— the world, the All that is,
Is nothing now to me—

HASAN.

Bind him, I ſay.

ZOBEIDE.

Thus, on my knees, ye pow'rs, devote I ſwear,
Never to take a murd'rer to my boſom!
The noble mind fixt on its own reſolves
Meets death where'er it ſeeks it.

SEYFEL.

O let me take
A laſt farewel—Support yourſelf with firmneſs—
In other climes, where vice can ne'er intrude,
We'll meet again, my child, to part no more.

[Exeunt Perſians with Seyfel.

ZOBEIDE.

My father! Oh! my father!—a moment ſtay.—

Enter SCYTHIANS.

SCYTHIAN.

At length we have prevail'd.

HERMODON.

Gods! I thank ye:
My ſon ſhall be reveng'd—Can this be true?

SCYTHIAN.

Heav'n reſtores juſtice, and the Scythians conquer;
Half of the Perſians now await their deaths,
The others are retiring to the woods.

HERMODON.

The murd'rer of my ſon—has he eſcap'd?

SCYTHIAN.

What the fierce Athamand?
Diſpenſing manfully his blows around him
Upon our ſtouteſt chiefs—at length he fell:
All gaſh'd with wounds, raving on Zobeide ſtill,
Daring in death, they drag him on in chains.

HERMODON.

Let us have full revenge—I will not ſtay—
We'll execute to th' rigour of our law,
Th' inviolable law, which rules our country.

ZOBEIDE.

What law?

SEYFEL.

See, ſee, they bring the haughty prince.

Enter ATHAMAND in chains, with PERSIANS.

ATHAMAND.

Scythians, I'm conquer'd, and I yield to fate;
But e'er you lead a monarch to a dungeon,
Let me behold the object of my love!
The rage of love has dragg'd me to my ruin:
Forgetting Glory, and the pride of empire,
I left a world to raiſe her to my throne.
O! caſt one look of pity on your prince:
Theſe wounds may claim one tranſient gleam of mercy,
One ſympathizing—Ha! ſhe melts in tears.

HERMODON.

Drag him this inſtant hence—We will have vengeance.

ATHAMAND.

Villains, ſtand off, give me a moment's pauſe,
For I will graſp her in theſe eager arms
'Till life expiring—

HERMODON.

All requeſts are vain.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

Hew, hack my flesh, ye slaves!—but Zobeide—

[Exit all but Zobeide.

ZOBEIDE.

Oh! insupportable—Confusion! tortures!——
The Gods had stor'd their vengeance to this hour,
And thus it bursts in cataracts upon me.
Can I forget my prince? But what was Indater?
Ah! what indeed?—the gentlest, best of men.
And what is Athamand?—Support me, Heav'n!
Or shield me from the horrors that surround me.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

HERMODON, ZOBEIDE, SEYFEL, SCYTHIANS.

ZOBEIDE.

WHY do ye pauſe? Proclaim your Scythian law,
Nor fear to add new terrors to my ſoul:
What means this dreadful ſolemn preparation?

SEYFEL.

My child—I ſcarce can ſpeak—behold the altar
Which I this morn adorn'd with nuptial wreaths,
With mournful emblems ſtrew'd ere ſet of ſun.

HERMODON.

Th' inviolable law which rules our country,
Demands the widow'd fair to ſacrifice,

In

In preſence of the Gods, the murderer's blood;
That Hymen's flame may be the flame of vengeance;
That the lov'd manes of her injur'd huſband,
The ſhade that hovers o'er this mournful land,
To purer air may take its happier flight,
Replume its wing, and waft its way to bliſs.

ZOBEIDE.

Am I to ſacrifice? Ah! whom?—my father!——

HERMODON.

Heav'n hath reſerv'd this bloody miniſter.

[Preſents a dagger.

SCYTHIAN.

Thy glory ſure demands——

SEYFEL.

You may revere
That law your anceſtors did conſecrate;
But danger follows—Perſia will be fear'd—
Big clouds impend, the gathering ſurges roar,
Yourſelves are ſhipwreck'd in the ſtorm you raiſe.

SCYTHIAN.

Let the ſwoln tempeſt rage—yet undiſmay'd,
Scythians ſhall dare to cope with Perſian valour.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

No time to waver now—delay offends—
Your huſband's murder cries to heaven for vengeance.

ZOBEIDE.

O people! hear me ſpeak:
I was in Perſia born, and am a ſtranger
To thoſe harſh laws which bind theſe ruder climes:
Athamand is valiant—
A valiant chief would never ſtoop to murder—
Scythians, ye know the worth of godlike courage!
My huſband bled beneath a conqueror's arm:
Juſtice ye ſurely prize as well as vengeance:
Weigh and reſolve—Say, is it mine to ſtrike?
To plunge my guilty hands in ſacred blood,
And kill a warrior, who is ſtill my king?

HERMODON.

And kill a warrior!—If thy too timid hand,
Rejecting ev'ry claim of rightful marriage,
The holy ties of gratitude and love,
Shall heſitate to make this expiation——
Dread the rough maxims of an injur'd ſtate.

ZOBEIDE.

ZOBEIDE.

But, if the weakneſs of my ſex prevail,
And I, o'ercome with terror, ſhould refuſe—

SCYTHIAN.

He ſhall expire beneath the ſharpeſt tortures.

ZOBEIDE.

You then demand a victim ſlain by me?

HERMODON.

Reject not Scythia's law.

ZOBEIDE.

(After a pauſe) I accept it.

[Takes the dagger.

HERMODON.

Dar'ſt thou, in preſence of th' immortal Gods,
Confirm this oath?

ZOBEIDE.

I ſwear it, cruel men!
I ſwear it, Hermodon: Ye thirſt for blood;
Be ſure ye have enough; but 'till the hour,

Ye lead a monarch to your barb'rous altars,
In mercy keep him from my tortur'd ſight;
Meanwhile, I would ſome counſel from my father;
Then act your wills, I patiently reſign.

SCYTHIAN.

Let us retire, my friends.

HERMODON.

The widow'd fair one
Declares herſelf ſubmiſſive to our law;
My deep-felt grief will ſomewhat be appeas'd,
If hands like thoſe ſubmit to give us vengeance.

[Ex. Hermodon and Scythians.

SEYFEL.

There was a time, when through the daring prince
I would have ſtabb'd a guilty monarch's heart;
Now pity pleads aloud for the unfortunate,
And fierce reſentments languiſh in regret.

ZOBEIDE.

How could you dive into my inmoſt thoughts,
And read each varying ſtruggle of my ſoul?

SEYFEL.

I fain would weep thy gen'rous huſband's fate;
But now, alas! I feel alone for thee!
This raſh deteſted oath!

ZOBEIDE.

You ſee the altar—
Should I refuſe, you know what torments wait him;
After this fatal blow—and all our ſufferings,
O ſay—will you too ſink upon his tomb?

SEYFEL.

I there would die.

ZOBEIDE.

No, live—I charge you live;
The gallant Perſians will revenge this outrage,
The youths of Ecbatan to Scythia's wilds,
From Taurus will deſcend with winged ſpeed,
Will, like a torrent, pour their rapid force,
And drive theſe monſters from their rocky faſtneſs.

SEYFEL.

Alas! I greatly fear—

ZOBEIDE.

Talk not of fear,
It is allied to guilt—we will not fear;
'Tis true, the groſs inhabitants of Scythia
Are ſavage, cruel—not invincible.
But, oh! meanwhile, by every awful tie,
Secure the pardon of our captive friends;
E'en as the victim bleeds, let all be free,
And paſs the mountains under faith of treaty.

SEYFEL.

Aſſure thyſelf, my child, I will obtain it—
And yet this treaty ſerves but to confound me,
The prince no leſs will periſh at the altar—
The Perſians will not rouze but to avenge him.

ZOBEIDE.

I've weigh'd my deſtiny, and all's reſolv'd.

SEYFEL.

I freeze with horror.

ZOBEIDE.

Go, I partake it all.
The time is precious, leave me to ſummon ſtrength:
In ſolemn ſuit invoke each conſcious being
To bear eternal record to the vow.

You

You firmly urge, not Scythians dare renounce
This dread recognizance from earth to heav'n.

SEYFEL.

I go, but ſore oppreſt with ills like theſe;
Whate'er's decreed, my doom is fixt deſpair.

[Exit.

ZOBEIDE.

How long muſt I reſtrain this ſtorm of grief—
Nor greater ſure inflicted by the Gods!
My Sulma comes—and I unload my heart.

Enter SULMA.

SULMA.

And do we meet again! What ſcenes of blood
Since laſt we parted! O! let us part no more,
'Till fate hath finiſh'd its laſt cruel edict.

ZOBEIDE.

Thou yet muſt ſee a far more piteous ſight.

SULMA.

More piteous ſight!—Zobeide will ne'er ſubmit
To ſatiate ſavage minds with guilty ſlaughter?

ZOBEIDE.

Think'ſt thou that I'll complain to Scythian monſters?
Complain to ſeas, to rocks, to ſteel, or adamant —
For them I left a people moſt renown'd,
Sometimes unjuſt—but poliſh'd, great, and generous.
Shall I complain to Scythians?—Nations! Earth!
O kings! What outrage? Gods! Maſters of thunder!
Unite with me.——
Let Death ſtalk uncontroul'd till Taurus' high
He heap on heap, piles mountains of the ſlain.
What means this frantic rage? vain, vain regrets!
Theſe imprecations ſerve but to diſtract me;
O, Rage! what art thou? flatterer of a moment,
A ſhort-liv'd paſſion, preying on thyſelf,
I ſink thy ſlave—I feel thy deadly power,
Thou fixt eternal foe to ſteady virtue.

SULMA.

Let Reaſon's balmy breath aſſuage your griefs,
You're not reduc'd to ſerve their cruel purpoſe.

ZOBEIDE.

Then Athamand muſt ſhare the bittereſt tortures.

SULMA.

SULMA.

But, oh! that ſecret love, which ardent pleads—

ZOBEIDE.

Shall ever plead—How can I then reſolve
To plunge a dagger in a monarch's heart,
Who came to lay his empire at my feet?

SULMA.

'Tis ſo abhorr'd a deed—the ſavage Scythians,
Whoſe altars reek not but with human blood;
Ah! did they know your love—would ſtay your hand,
Arm'd to deſtroy him.

ZOBEIDE.

No, they would urge the deed;
Such are their cruel hearts—Such, ſuch is man,
By ſimple nature kind, nay oft times good,
But if provok'd, his vengeance is unbounded.

SULMA.

The wretched Seyfel to theſe Scythians bound
In cloſeſt leagues of amity—link'd with them,
Let him bear out the ills he ſolely caus'd.

ZOBEIDE.

Too much for me he ſuffers—I only wiſh
To weed each rankling poiſon from his breaſt,
Not add new troubles to his rev'rend age:
But, O ye Pow'rs! attend his laſt requeſt,
Bend the ſtern purpoſe of this ruſtic ſenate,
Confirm th' important oath—heal Perſia's woes,
Nor force me act a deed yourſelves abhor.

SULMA.

You now give life to my affrighted ſenſe.

[Solemn muſic at a diſtance.]

ZOBEIDE.

Thoſe ſolemn ſounds proclaim th' eventful hour,
And ſummon me to more than death—trembling
I ſtand the ſhock—reviſit mortal clime
Spirits of good! if when in fleſhly mould
Something ye knew of what I now endure,
Aid my firm labours—in a righteous cauſe
'Tis yours to ſuccour;—And if your ſuppliant acts
Obedient to your wills—reward the deed;—
Twine round my brow the wreaths of brighteſt fame,
Laurels which fade not, gems which can't decay.

[Dead march.]

SCENE

SCENE the laſt.

HERMODON, SEYFEL, ZOBEIDE, SCYTHIANS.

First SCYTHIAN.

Hail to the ſhadowy grove, whoſe deep-felt gloom
Still adds new horrors to this awful ſcene!
Guard round the ruſtic altar, worthy friends,
Leſt footſteps rude invade theſe hallow'd haunts,
Or brawling noiſe profane the ſolemn hour.

HERMODON.

Sure here ſome ſecret unknown Pow'r reſides,
Whoſe eye pervades, and well approves this offering;
At this dread hour he ſits in myſtic ſtate,
And chills the ſoul with awe and veneration.

ZOBEIDE.

What Power can here reſide of good to man?
Theſe are the favour'd haunts of dim Deſpair,
Of fire-ey'd Madneſs, or ſunk Melancholy;
Here Murder prowls—here, when that witch the Night,
High pois'd in air, performs her ſecret rites,
And ſpreads her baneful mantle o'er the ſkies.

HE[illegible]ODON.

Miſdeem us not, if when ſtern Juſtice calls,
We rigidly obey its awful ſummons;
A murder'd ſon demands this expiation;
'Tis due to us, to him, to heav'n, and vengeance.

First SCYTHIAN.

Nor vengeance dearer than our country's law.

ZOBEIDE.

Enough, enough—ſwear but by every power,
The blood of all my countrymen is ſacred,
And this fell hand ſubmits to give you vengeance.

SEYFEL.

All ſhall be ſpar'd, we ſwear—th' immortal Gods
Ne'er ſaw a Scythian violate his oath.
Now lead him to the altar.

ZOBEIDE.

A moment ſtay——
Yet why ſhould terror more pervade my heart?
I ſcorn the woman in me—Lead him on—
I'll firmly brave this thunder-bolt of heaven.

SEYFEL.

And do I live to this—O teeming earth!
Ope thy wide jaws in mercy to receive me!

SULMA.

Inexorable fortune!

Enter ATHAMAND guarded.

ATHAMAND.

Dear Zobeide!
Take—take the ſteel; let thy uplifted hand
Pierce a fond heart, devote to thee alone;
Preſerve the honour'd lives of all my friends,
Give me my death, I unrepining fall;
I kiſs the trembling hand which fearful ſtrikes,
Nor think it ruin to be ſo deſtroy'd,
To bleed for Zobeide and my orphan'd country.

ZOBEIDE.

O ſtop this torrent of o'erwhelming goodneſs,
My generous, cruel prince!—words arm'd like theſe
Unnerve my feeble hand, and quite ſubdue me;
Breathe ſharpeſt curſes, ſting me to my purpoſe;
Diſtract me not with tender proteſtations,
Nor vanquiſh courage with ſuch kind endearments.

ATHAMAND.

Yet hear me ſpeak the ſource of each misfortune,
And tho' too late, aſſert my injur'd honour;

Smerdis, to add new firmneſs to his throne,
Urg'd me to wed the daughter of a king
Neareſt allied in empire and dominion,
But, oh! my heart was fixt on thee alone,
Not daring openly to thwart his will,
I ſeemingly conſented—but determin'd
Inſtant with previous nuptials to prevent it;
I ſeemingly conſented—accurſed hour!
'Twas then report bore on its rapid wing
The ſhameful tale of my ill-ſeeming purpoſe;
And ere my truſty friends could ſearch thee out,
And tell each fearful oath I'd ſworn to Heav'n,
Thy fears betray'd thee to believe me falſe,
Thy fears, alas! had driv'n thee from thyſelf,
And borne thee far from me, from peace and Perſia.

ZOBEIDE.

And was thy purpoſe juſt?—What then am I?
Thy truth to me has dragg'd thee to thy ruin;
Thou fixt aloft, triumphant on a throne,
Lov'd by the people, favour'd by the Gods,
Wide as the ſun had'ſt ſpread thy bleſſings round thee;
But, oh! I've hurl'd thee from the giddy height,
And plung'd thee deep in guilt, and endleſs mis'ries.

The

The groans of all my country plead againſt me,
Ill-omen'd viſions fright my mad'ning brain,
And furies ring a knell of dire preſages.

HERMODON.

The impatient hour reproves our long delay.

SEYFEL.

O! let me kneel before my honour'd prince—

SCYTHIAN.

Away; doſt thou too—

HERMODON.

We will not pauſe; proceed—

ZOBEIDE.

Inſatiate monſters! ſtay—ye know not, ſure,
The guilt ye would enforce—Athamand is my
Prince;
Nay more, for I adore him—I here avow
My ſecret love—I here declare my paſſion—
I here abjure thoſe nuptials which have bound me.

ATHAMAND.

I die content.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

What means this frantic woe?
Nature herſelf is ſick at thy lamentings.

ZOBEIDE.

When Scythians fall, no ſtars withdraw their blaze,
An atom ſinks unheeded—unregarded—
But O! thy fate drinks dry a nation's eyes,
All Perſia ſinks one great ſtupendous ruin,
And I become the murderer of a world.

ATHAMAND.

This kind embrace o'erpays whole years of anguiſh;
Bleſt in thy love, I leave the world to fate.

ZOBEIDE.

Long has the captive worn the galling chain,
But now to hail the dawn of riſing joys,
To view ſome holier land where mercy reigns,
Where peace ſhall bloom with bleſſings ever new;
Hail, happy land!—there, there again to reſt,
Where man can not oppreſs, or I offend him;
Spare but his life, and thus to finiſh mine.

[Stabs herſelf.

O live, my prince! thus dying I entreat thee.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

Zobeide!

SEYFEL.

My child!

SULMA.

My ever honor'd friend!

HERMODON.

Take off his chains, we grant his rated life.

ATHAMAND.

Talk'ſt thou of life to one all gaſh'd with wounds,
Torn on the wheel, or ſtruggling in his tortures,
His limbs all mangled, or his heart deſtroy'd?
No, no, this reeking ſteel from Zobeide's wound
Prevents the greater curſe. [Kills himſelf.

ZOBEIDE.

Then all is loſt.—
Nor e'en my death can expiate theſe diſaſters.
Thou who alone can'ſt judge the feeble heart,
At length look pitying on me——
Whilſt theſe faint accents languiſh on my tongue,
Whilſt life ſtands trembling on the brink of fate
I fain would plead—but thou art juſt—tho' I am—
[Dies.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

The ſtruggle's paſt, and the world ſinks before me;
Extend your mercy to my ſole requeſt!
Let one ſmall ſpot encloſe our laſt remains,
'Tis all I aſk, and Perſia will requite you.
What now is all the baſeleſs dream of power,
Ambition's fire, the luſt of wealth or empire?
The ſcene once clos'd, each glittering proſpect fails—
The dreary manſions of the peaceful grave
Receive alike the Scythian and the Monarch.
Now, now I ſink—my Zobeide—mercy, Heaven!
[Dies.

HERMODON.

Bear off my wretched friend—woes great as theſe
Preſs heavy on his years—Submit we to our fate:
Submit we to the ſtern award of awful heaven;
My ſon, my country, and the Gods appeas'd,
Mercy uſurps the rigid ſeat of juſtice,
And weeps in mournful tribute o'er their graves.

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

By Mr. MURPHY.

Spoken by Mrs. YATES.

WELL fare the man, peace to his gentle ſhade,
The Bard who firſt made Epilogues a trade;
Elſe what a life an Actreſs muſt purſue?——
To weep and rave is all ſhe'd have to do;
Upon the Stage, with warring paſſions ſore,
"To fret her hour, and then be heard no more."

Now, after poiſon, daggers, rage, and death,
We come again to take a little breath;
Rally the Pit; ſet Belles and Beaux at odds,
And be a mere free-thinker to the Gods; [To the upper gallery.
Chat in familiar ſtrain; the Boxes maul;
—An Epilogue, like gaming—levels all.

Not e'en poor Bayes *within muſt hope to be*
Free from the laſh:—His Play be writ for me,
'Tis true—and now my gratitude you'll ſee.

EPILOGUE.

Why ramble with Voltaire *to Eaſtern climes,*
To Scythian laws, and antiquated times?
Change but the names, his Tragedy, at beſt,
Slides into Comedy, and turns to jeſt.

As thus—A Stateſman, old, and out of place,
Sour, diſcontented, malice in his face,
(In theſe bleſt days, we but ſuppoſe the caſe)
Flies from St. James's *to his own eſtate,*
To chew the wiſdom of each paſt debate;
How in the Houſe he made a glorious ſtir,
With, "Sir, I move"—and, "Mr. Speaker, Sir!"
Zobeide's *his daughter* Sophy:—*Oh! farewell*
For her each haunt that charms a modern Belle!
Adieu Almack's! Cornelly's *Maſquerade!*
Sweet Ranelagh! Vauxhall's *enchanting ſhade!*
Squire Groom makes love; Rich? yes; a vaſt domain;
Well-bred?—the ſavage Scythian of the Plain!
The match is fix'd; deeds ſign'd; the knot is ty'd;
Down comes my Lord in all his glitt'ring pride.
And will my Angel chuſe this ruſtic plan?
"Oh! Cuckold him by all means; I'm your man."
Now mark our Author's ignorance of life?
What, not elope? Is that a modiſh Wife?

Poor

EPILOGUE.

Poor fool! she doubts; says No: the Husband dies:
Now stab yourself, says Bayes; *but Nature cries,*
How! sacrifice myself for vain Renown!
John, *put the horses to, and drive to town.*
That would be life; the manners; painted high!
But our Bard makes,—to moisten ev'ry eye,
A Widow with a Prince refuse to fly.

Yet, after all, excuse him, Ladies, pray;
For sure there is some Nature in his Play.
A first attempt let no keen Censure blight,
Hereafter he may soar a nobler flight;
Drop one kind tear; give him that slender token;
And hither come, till the Pantheon *open.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 30. l. 6. for *distractions*, read *distraction.*
54. l. 15. for *sorrows*, read *horrors.*

EPILOGUE.